DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 064 436 UD 012 478

AUTHOR Yip, Douglas
TITLE SEED: A Preliminary Report.
INSTITUTION Toronto Board of Education (Ontario). Research Dept.
PUB DATE Mar 71
NOTE 28p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Community Resources; Curriculum Development; *Experimental Schools; *Open Education; *Program Development; School Community Relationship; Secondary Education; *Secondary Schools; Secondary School Students; Secondary School Teachers; Student Centered Curriculum; Student Characteristics; Volunteers
IDENTIFIERS *Canada

ABSTRACT

The Summer of Experience, Exploration, and Discovery (SEED) program is an outgrowth of a summer program which originated in the summer of 1968. When its establishment was approved by the Toronto Board of Education, it was designed to exist as a distinct alternative to the regular secondary school program. However, to ensure that students would not lose a year of their education should they leave the program, the students are required to take languages, science, and mathematics from qualified teachers. These subjects are taught, however, in a different way compared to the regular methods. One of the aims of SEED is to offer the student a wide variety of studies in which he can participate. If a number of SEED students develop an interest which is not currently taught, they may attempt to contact someone in the city community who is interested in teaching them. They, along with their newly-found resource person, or catalyst, design a course curriculum around that specific interest. Since SEED offers the student a chance to participate in his own education, a high level of maturity is necessary. There are over 60 non-credit catalyst-taught courses at SEED, over and above the "core," traditional subjects given by the four core staff teachers. (Author/JM)

ED 064436

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

UD 012478

SEED: A Preliminary Report

Douglas Yip,
Research Department,
The Board of Education for the City of Toronto,
March, 1971.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
PREFACE	1
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT	2
BASIC CONCEPTS OF SEED	6
SEED -- THE PLACE	10
SEED -- THE ATMOSPHERE	12
SEED -- THE TEACHERS	15
SEED -- THE CATALYSTS	19
SEED -- THE STUDENTS	21
THE "FINAL REPORT"	26

PREFACE

In the fall of 1970, when PROJECT SEED was established as an experimental school under the auspices of the Board of Education for the City of Toronto, I was selected to act, on behalf of the Research Department, as a participant observer of the SEED programme. Since this programme is innovative and a departure from the various secondary school programmes already in existence in Toronto, Dr. E. N. Wright, Research Director for the Board, believed that valuable information about many areas of the SEED programme could be obtained by my participation with SEED. In addition to observing the various activities in which the students were involved and speaking directly with the students about the programme, Dr. Wright felt that some form of personal involvement in SEED would help to gather information about the programme. Knowing that one of my interests is creative photography, he asked me to participate in the SEED programme by offering some instruction in photography.

I have been involved with SEED for the past three months and this preliminary report is an attempt to provide some descriptive information about SEED. A final comprehensive report about the SEED project, to be completed in the autumn of 1971, will provide much more information about the programme and, hopefully, answers to the many questions being asked about it.

Since this is a preliminary report on the SEED project, it must be emphasized that any report about an enterprise as complex as SEED must be committed to examining it in depth, not limiting itself

to an outline of the programme. This report attempts to give the reader basic information about the programme, its participants and their interaction, its atmosphere, and general operating philosophy. For those interested in some of the statistical elements, they will have to wait for the final report.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

In the spring of 1968, a member of the Toronto Board of Education proposed that a summer educational programme of an enrichment nature, be offered for many young people who would be unable to find employment for the two-month vacation period during July and August. The programme would be conducted in existing school buildings which were vacant during the summer months and staffed by volunteer resource personnel from the city community as well as by teachers who were willing to donate their services. By June of that year, the Board approved the proposal and SEED (which stood for a SUMMER of EXPERIENCE, EXPLORATION, and DISCOVERY) was founded.

Mr. Murray Shukyn, and Mr. Les Birmingham, teachers of the Toronto Board volunteered as coordinators and directed the programme which was composed of a variety of topics of personal interest to the six hundred young people who enrolled. The participants grouped themselves according to their interests and met in an informal way for discussions, field-trips, and other activities. The direct cost of this programme was slightly over nine hundred dollars which was financed by the Toronto Board of Education. An additional cost of three hundred dollars for transportation was assumed by the Toronto Teacher's Federation.

The programme was continued during the summer vacation period of 1969 with Mr. Birmingham and Mr. Shukyn, again acting as coordinators, this time being given a summer school teachers' stipend. A greater variety of studies was offered that year because of the assistance of more people from the community who volunteered their services.

By this time, some people began to look upon the SEED programme as an alternative to the traditional mode of secondary school education. The enthusiasm with which many students and their volunteer "instructors" had received the programme and their involvement and committment to it encouraged the continuation of this informal and unstructured learning experience of extra-curricular education through the fall, winter and spring of 1969-1970 (as it had the previous winter).

Interested students continued with the SEED programme after the regular school day in their neighbourhood was over. Travelling to various places in Toronto, they met with other students who shared their interests and who wished to learn about and discuss these interests with their volunteer instructors, who were now called catalysts. Many students who enjoyed this "new" and different type of learning environment along with their catalysts and other interested people who saw the programme as an educational alternative, formed a committee. Two students, Eddy Waitzer and Sara Diamond, submitted this committee's brief to the Toronto Board in the winter of 1969-70, requesting that SEED be established as an experimental alternative to the regular secondary school programme.

The Board formed a special committee to deal with this matter. The summer SEED programme was again continued in 1970, similar to the programmes of the previous two years. But, on the recommendation of the Management Committee of the Board in June of 1970, SEED was officially established as a part of the regular Toronto school system. The programme was to commence in September of 1970 with an enrollment of one hundred students under Mr. Shukyn's direction as Coordinator and a core staff of four teachers who would give instruction in English, a foreign language, science and mathematics.

Since the school buildings would be in full use during the fall school term, other facilities had to be located. In the first summer SEED had based its programme at the Education Centre (Toronto Board of Education, Administrative Offices), in the summer of 1969 at West Park Vocational School, and during the winter of 1969-70 facilities were contributed by the Anglican Church. In addition to these facilities which served as a general meeting place for a part of the programme, discussion and work groups met at the homes, offices, studios and laboratories of the catalysts. Vacant quarters in the Y.M.H.A. building at the corner of Spadina Avenue and Bloor Street, were used by SEED during the summer of 1970 and offered advantages such as handball and badminton courts, ballet practice rooms, swimming pool and other athletic facilities. The location of the "Y" building is central to the City as well as being close to the University of Toronto, O.I.S.E., various libraries and other facilities that these institutions offered, and also reasonably close to the homes, offices and laboratories of the many catalysts who were donating their services. The Y.M.H.A. location was ideally situated on the across-town (east-west) artery of Toronto's subway system which had a station just a few hundred feet from the school. Bus service, running north and south, through the City was also close by on Spadina Avenue, with a bus stop right outside the doors of the school. An agreement was made to continue renting the facilities at the Y.M.H.A. for the winter SEED programme under the Toronto Board's auspices. SEED school is located there.

BASIC CONCEPTS OF SEED

When the students of SEED submitted their brief to the Toronto Board of Education, they conceived of their school as an experiment in education. They believed that they were learning things which were previously inaccessible to them in their regular secondary schools, and in a way which they believed facilitated learning. Knowing that the Toronto Board was interested in keeping pace with new concepts and reform in education, they had hoped that SEED would serve as a model for future endeavours. These students also believed that SEED would serve as an alternative in education for those students who would go through school without performing to their potential or who might otherwise drop out. These students felt that an informal and fairly unstructured learning environment would be more conducive to learning for this type of student.

When the establishment of SEED was approved by the Toronto Board, it was designed to exist as a distinct alternative to the regular secondary school programme. However, to ensure that students would not lose a year of their education should they decide not to continue in SEED, the Board felt that the students should be required to take some courses from qualified teachers in order that they would be able to receive credits for secondary school graduation diplomas and university entrance requirements. These subjects -- languages, science, and mathematics -- are taught, however, in a different way compared to the methods often used in the regular schools. (This does not mean that the approaches used in SEED cannot be used in the regular schools.)

One of the aims of SEED is to offer the student a wide variety of studies in which he can participate. If a number of SEED students develop an interest (often triggered by one person) which is not currently

taught they may attempt to contact someone in the city community who is interested in teaching them. They, along with their newly-found catalyst, design a course curriculum around that specific interest. Since SEED offers the student a chance to participate in his own education, a high level of maturity is necessary. The students at SEED learn that since they are given the opportunity to guide their own learning, they must hold themselves responsible for whatever they obtain from the programme. A student who continually complains that he has an interest in a specific area of knowledge, but never takes responsibility for seeking out and obtaining this knowledge, is not highly regarded by the other SEED students. Likewise, a SEED student who bewails the shortcomings of his traditional education, but once enrolled in SEED does not pursue his work with self-responsibility, is not admired by the others. SEED offers the student an alternative in education -- an opportunity to pursue whatever field of interest he wishes to learn about -- but he must be highly motivated to go out and learn how to get what he is interested in. He must be willing to hold himself <u>accountable</u> for his decisions and take the consequences of his own actions.

It is anticipated that if the SEED programme is continued in future years, the special interest courses now taught by the catalysts may be organized so that they meet the approval of the Ontario Department of Education as courses for secondary school credit. Mr. A. Milloy, the Superintendent for Secondary Schools for the Toronto Board of Education, mentioned in his first bulletin about SEED, in September, 1970, that should official approval of these courses be granted, "it would be hoped that diploma and university admission requirements would be met with 'major' credits in the traditional studies."

Already, there are over 60 non-credit catalyst-taught courses at SEED, over and above the "core," traditional subjects given by the four core staff teachers. The number and diversity of courses taken by these students attests to their eagerness to participate in and their responsibility to organize and design their own educational programmes. The courses presently in existence run the gamut from astrology, genetics, psychotherapy (actual and theoretical), pharmacology, conversational Mandarin Chinese, computer programming, mass media communication, science fiction literature, graphology, sanskrit, English literature of many periods, yoga, the study of the occult, to laboratory courses in hematology, human biology, film-making, and actual construction of miniature computers, logic circuits, and stereophonic amplifiers.

Besides the concepts of an educational programme built by students for students, that all learning is to be self-motivated and student-initiated, another concept of the SEED programme is to utilize the resources of the city community. SEED is to be a community school, interacting and cooperating with those in the City. Many SEED students feel that they can acquire for themselves, an excellent education which would meet their interests yet involve a minimal cost to the Board. This is accomplished by searching out and using volunteer catalysts. By being forced to go out and find the resource person who will volunteer his time and efforts, the students obtain an education in their area of interest without additional education expenditure. Many of their catalysts are professors at the University of Toronto and York University, while others are professionals working in their own fields such as medical research, advertising, journalism, broadcasting, painting and sculpturing, psychiatry, etc.

By way of reciprocating, some SEED students have shared their own expertise with their fellow students and with the community as well. Several students who have attended schools in Europe, are teaching their fellow students conversational French; another is showing some of his friends how to develop films. Two students are devoting their Sunday mornings to teaching speed reading to several university professors, SEED catalysts and other interested parties. This is a skill which the students had been taught a year earlier at SEED. Other SEED students have participated in welfare and public service projects in their community. Several students offered their assistance in taking care of a busload of elementary school students who were forced by a snow storm to stay in the City overnight.

Many SEED students live by the concepts of cooperation and sharing. SEED is not a competitive programme where students are extrinsically motivated to excel for grades, but a programme in which each student is intrinsically motivated to learn for himself and to cooperate with others in attaining his goals.

The students at SEED do not feel that they are fighting the existing educational system or isolating themselves from the system but rather that they are working within the present school system, hoping that their school will serve as an alternative model of education.

SEED -- THE PLACE

SEED school is most unlike the regular schools one sees in the City of Toronto. Upon entering the Y.M.H.A. building at the south-west corner of Bloor Street and Spadina Avenue, one encounters groups of young people walking about or sitting relaxed individually, or in groups. The impression one first has is that of an informal student union at a college or university. There are no study desks arranged in the usual manner, instead, there is a random array of comfortable looking upholstered couches, some stacking-type chairs, and some study desks and tables scattered around the first-floor lounge. The walls of this lower (first-floor) or main lounge are covered with brightly coloured murals, posters, illustrations and photographs, which the students have done themselves or which have been donated to the school. One small area of one wall serves as a bulletin board and near the adjacent wall is the coat rack.

Beside the entrance-way to this lounge is a small door covered with styrofoam sculpture and paper collages. This door leads to the office of Murray Shukyn, the director of the school. Inside this office one usually finds the director and a large number of students engaged in conversation, using the telephone or the copy machine, typing letters, signing out photographic or tape recording equipment, or looking for a niche in which to store their books. This tiny office is also unrepresentative of school offices throughout the City. Not only is this office brightly decorated in contemporary psychedelic, but one is surprised to find it so crowded with students, each carrying out

his work or leisurely talking, feet on a table, about some particular interest. One also finds students crowded together and sitting on the floor, earnestly engaged in conversation.

The first-floor main lounge is the general meeting area for the students. It is approximately 50' x 60' in size and is connected to similar-sized lounges on the second and third floors via an enclosed staircase just outside the lounge door. The second-floor lounge is quieter in appearance, with fewer wall decorations, but with more study tables, chairs, desks and sofas. It is here in the second-floor lounge and on the similarly furnished third-floor lounge, that many of the students groups meet for discussion with their teachers and catalysts. There are shelves full of various books on a plethora of topics, several large blackboards mounted on dollied-easels, and groups of students discussing their subjects or listening to their instructor. There are also small groups of students studying together or working individually. The "core" subject teachers usually meet with their groups in the upper two lounges. Many catalysts meet with their groups in the building as well, although some find it more convenient to meet with their students at their homes, offices, or laboratories.

SEED -- THE ATMOSPHERE

To quote one professor who dropped down to SEED after hearing about this unique concept in education, "I walked through the door and all I saw was a bunch of long-haired, spaced-out kids sitting around. No desks, no blackboards....? This is a school?" The general atmpsphere at SEED is very relaxed, warm and friendly. The students are not requested to dress in a specific way and their grooming is individualistic. They do not address their director, or any of their teachers in a formal manner but prefer to relate to everyone as a person instead of by title or authority: teachers, catalysts and students have equal status. A first-name basis is maintained for everyone. There are few formalities here that one usually finds in the regular schools. This informal atmosphere seems to encourage a free flow of communication between teachers and students. Students feel free to leave a discussion if they feel they are not benefitting from it and are likewise free to return to it later. They do not believe in being a captive audience for teachers whose class has not fulfilled their expectations for the moment. The teachers, for the most part, have grown to accept this. The interchange of ideas, the questioning and answering in these classes is informal and unstructured. The students relate to the teachers as people and not as authority figures who have the power to command their attention and control their actions. Because this power relationship is not present, the student at SEED feels free to interact with his teacher as an interested peer and not as a subordinate.

Within the school, there is a minimum of rules. The students are treated as adults and are held accountable for their own behaviour. The students are expected to be responsible for their own rate of learning and to cover the material at their own speed. Whether they do their assignments and their reading is their own responsibility. The teachers do not issue threats, detentions, or punishment for work not covered. There are no external demands made on the student who must decide for himself whether and what he wants to learn. One of the basic requisites for a school atmosphere of this kind is that the students enrolled must possess a high degree of self-motivation. Part of the implicit philosophy of SEED is that the programme does not fail him but that the student fails himself. Theoretically, at least, SEED is designed to provide the mature, responsible student almost anything he is motivated to study, and if he fails to learn, he has only himself to blame. At SEED, the attitude toward achieving one's individual goals are just that -- individual responsibility. The atmosphere is open and free enough that should a student have some difficulty, he should be free enough to discuss it with others who may be able to help him or who may suggest someone who may provide that assistance. There appears to be a lack of competition present at SEED, but instead, a genuine feeling of cooperation.

SEED, as it is organized, is unstructured. Not only are the groups conducted in an informal manner, but there is a lack of rigidity in class scheduling. Students are not confined to 40 minute periods for each subject, but usually meet one or more times weekly for several hours to discuss their subject. Quite often group classes run much longer than the time "allotted" for the groups. When this occurs and the group elects to continue the discussion, individuals who have another class, which is conflicting with the run-over time of their present class, must decide for themselves whether they should stay or leave for their other class.

Although the school runs from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., many students stay until 6:00 p.m. when the office is closed. On several occasions, the director has had to ask the students to leave because he had to return home to his family as it was nearing 7:00 p.m.

Many of the catalyst groups are held at places away from the SEED facilities and students travel via public transportation to attend these meetings. Many of the meetings are held in the late afternoons and evenings at various locations throughout the City. Is is not uncommon to have students intensely involved in a discussion at the home of a catalyst as late as 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. in the morning. Although the school officially runs five days a week, in actuality classes are held seven days a week. Several of the more popular classes meet on Saturday and Sunday and are attended by almost all who have enrolled in them.

SEED -- THE TEACHERS

When the Toronto Board approved of the establishment of SEED as an educational alternative, they stipulated that four highly qualified teachers be hired to teach the four "core" subject areas of English, a foreign language, science and mathematics. Not only were these teachers required to possess a high degree of knowledge and skill in their respective areas, they were also required to possess a genuine interest in young people and be highly adaptive, since they would be required to teach in quite an informal manner. The teaching style used in the traditional school situation might not be acceptable to many of the SEED students so some degree of ingenuity would appear necessary. Teachers from the Toronto school system were invited to submit applications for the four positions offered and after several interviews and discussions with Murray Shukyn, the cooordinator, they were selected. The teachers who were hired to teach at SEED are all well qualified and have about 50 years of diverse teaching experience among them. They are for the most part flexible, adaptive, innovative and very committed to teaching young people.

Their willingness to act on suggestions from the students for organizing each course and to evolve the course as designed by the students, yet keeping in mind the guidelines outlined by the Department of Education is an indication of the flexibility required in this situation. This could have posed some problem for less adaptive teachers. Many textbooks were examined before decisions were reached by each class about the books they would use and the direction the courses would follow.

The work load for each teacher is quite demanding, for they had to organize and teach courses in the same subject to students in grades 9 to 13. Most secondary school teachers have classes in two or three grade levels, whereas at SEED they have to teach four and five grade levels. Many of the teachers put in a tremendous amount of overtime preparing for each of their courses and setting up a schedule which would enable the students to receive the maximum benefit from their programme.

Each teacher uses a variety of teaching methods, adapting and changing his or her teaching style to suit the needs of the students in each class. Some classes preferred a less structured teaching situation with more discussion and student participation. Some preferred meeting every day for two hours while some students preferred meeting less often and being left to progress at their own individual pace. The staff have had to accommodate themselves to the preferences and needs of the students and at times this has been quite trying. However, they all seem to be succeeding extremely well, for several of them have even found time to interact and relate to their students on a close personal basis. Several of the teachers, as a result of this interaction have taken it upon themselves to teach additional courses in which they discovered their students were interested. One teacher now is offering grade 13 credit in a history course in which the students are interested although he teaches mathematics to five different grade levels. Another member of the staff has been teaching students ceramics and pottery in the evenings.

The informal structure of SEED has allowed for the building of good working relationships among the staff and students. Students and

teachers are on a first name basis and freely interact. Because of this free environment, students approach their teachers and quite often informal discussions run into other topics in which both parties are interested. It is not uncommon to see SEED students and teachers lunching together to discuss their newly-discovered mutual interests and concerns. It is also not uncommon to observe students and teachers deeply involved in discussion at 6:00 p.m. in the evening.

The teachers at SEED do not have a "captive audience" of students and appear to teach in a manner which reflects their personalities, interest and knowledge of the subject. There is a minimum of class control and discipline imposed by the staff on the students. The tacit agreement between students and staff appears to be that everyone attends a class because he wishes to learn and if he does not, he should not be there. There does not appear to be any need for the staff to request that the students perform and behave in a specific manner. If a student finds that he has progressed beyond the topic which the class may be covering, he is not required to sit through the discussion but may leave and return when he feels that a new topic is being taught.

In a regular school, the teacher is empowered to command the attention of his students and to control their behaviour. At SEED, the students feel that they should not be subjected to the traditonal classroom controls and would resent any attempts to be controlled by the teachers. Since there is a minimum of traditonal classroom structure, the teachers cannot expect the students to respond as in a regular school. The usual criteria by which teachers might assess their own abilities and lessons are absent: this could have been a serious personal threat to the teachers. Fortunately both staff and students understand the new

environment and behave in a manner which helps the teachers establish new roles and which offers an environment for the students conducive to learning.

The mutual respect of staff and students develops through their interaction. It cannot be demanded by virtue of a position of authority or role as "teacher."

There appears to be little need for discipline and control of student behaviour at SEED because both student and teacher acknowledge that it is the student's responsibility to learn whatever he wishes, in any manner which facilitates this learning. Both parties in this learning situation also acknowledge the fact that the student is accountable for the consequences of his decisions about his progress. Whether or not a student earns credit for his subjects is his own responsibility and not the teachers'.

The teachers appear to have succeeded in adapting to the demands imposed on them by the variety of situations and students at SEED. They have had to be innovative and flexible, calling upon their abilities to change their teaching styles to meet new situations which are assumed to occur less frequently in the regular school. Their patience and resourcefulness has resulted in a learning environment which realizes the SEED concept of education.

SEED -- THE CATALYSTS

Since its initiation as a summer programme, SEED has drawn volunteer resource personnel from the community. As noted, students took it upon themselves to seek out resource people in the community who could provide them with the knowledge they desired. They accomplished this by contacting the universities, professional associations and individuals who helped direct them to someone who would assist. Since the summer of 1968, students have obtained approximately 250 persons from diverse occupations and backgrounds to teach them. Many of these people volunteered their services without waiting to be asked.

Currently, there are more than 80 catalysts (volunteer resource people) giving a broad range of courses at SEED. These catalysts, for the most part, are teaching the students subjects with which they are intimately connected. Most of the catalysts are working professionals who have set aside a specific time from their busy weekly schedules to work with SEED students. About 95 per cent of the catalysts have been university educated and are particularly interested in the SEED style of education. They are as enthusiastic about teaching these students as the students are excited at being permitted to work with these specialists. Many of the catalysts teach at the University of Toronto and York University; others are architects, doctors, lawyers, psychiatrists and social workers; still others are working in the health professions, the performing arts and fine arts. Another group of catalysts is teaching students subjects in which they are intimately interested, although they are not working professionally in these areas. Some of these catalysts are homemakers, university students and SEED students themselves.

In most of the catalyst or SEED courses, the students start by working together with the catalyst to organize a course of studies. Topics to be discussed are decided by mutual interest and reading material is selected. A time and place of meeting is decided and the course is under way. The most common place of meeting is at the catalyst's home or place of work. If the course requires laboratory facilities, the students meet at university or hospital research labs, usually arranged by the catalyst.

Since there was overlap among some courses, further divisions and specialization into subareas have developed. The SEED courses in English literature have been divided into different periods, each with its own list of authors whose work was representative of the era. The psychology courses have been given by catalysts with different orientations and specializations. Several psychiatry courses are offered emphasizing the theoretical, philosophical and applied aspects. In several of the courses, the catalysts have been working with the core teachers and arrangements have been made so that some students enrolled in these courses are able to earn secondary school diploma credits.

The catalysts usually teach by reviewing the material read by the students and holding an open and informal discussion of the topic at hand. Several of the catalysts have brought in guest speakers to their classes, such as Ivan Illich and John Bremer. Other catalysts have taught their students by allowing them to work on projects involving laboratory, studio and darkroom facilities. At SEED, the students have an opportunity to learn by actually going out into the community to gather data for their research projects, performing experiments at medical research laboratories, making their own motion picture productions and meeting with knowledgeable specialists in their field of interest.

SEED -- THE STUDENTS

In September, 1970, when the Board formally announced that SEED be officially recognized as one of the schools within the Toronto system there was widespread public attention and interest. At the meeting held at Bickford Park High School to explain the programme, there was an overflow attendance. Since it had been decided to limit the total enrollment to 100 students to make the programme workable, a lottery was chosen as the only feasible method of providing each applicant with an equal opportunity to win a seat in SEED. Mrs. Fiona Nelson, a trustee, drew the names of the lottery winners at a subsequent meeting.

The applicants for SEED, with a few exceptions, were enrolled in arts and science programmes. Although SEED students are in grades 9 to 13 the majority are in the higher grades. Most of the students are taking core subjects for secondary school credits and diplomas as well as for university entrance, but there are some students who personally feel that the non-credit catalyst courses are more important to them and their course loads reflect this. The average student course load is eight subjects with a ratio of about 5:3 in favour of the SEED or catalyst subjects over core subjects. Some students are taking classes in as many as 15 different subjects and a few are only taking four.

The interests of most of the students at SEED cover a broad spectrum, but in general lean heavily toward the humanities, arts and the social sciences. Although many of the catalyst courses are taught at the university level the students appear quite capable of understanding the ideas presented. To most of these students, knowledge does not

come in neat little packages called subjects, but is much broader; they, therefore, try to relate the knowledge gained in one area to that of another.

Although most SEED students come from the arts and science stream in the regular schools, and are intersted in the humanities and social sciences, many of them also are deeply interested in technology. These students believe that their own development as sensitive and aware persons is contingent upon their ability to use the technological advances available to them. About a dozen students are learning about computer operations and programming with a lesser number engaged in the assembly of simple digital computer models. Several students are involved in constructing electronic amplifiers and colour organs. Over 30 students are enrolled in the motion picture and creative photography courses where they are learning how to develop visual awareness through the photographic medium. Many students in this group express a keen desire to master the equipment and techniques involved in order to communicate their ideas. At SEED, the concept of education is not limited to passive listening and reading but includes a great deal of "learning by doing."

Several students have stated that SEED provides an opportunity for each student to challenge himself in a manner not offered in the regular high school. The challenge which these students speak of is of an individual nature and their success or failure to acquire the knowledge that they seek is dependent on their ability to meet people in the community and relate to them in a manner which convinces them that they are sincere and earnest students who wish to learn from them. The SEED students feel that learning to acquire the ability of relating

to people from all strata and of all ages is the most important educational experience. Although they do not deny the importance of knowledge itself, they feel that it is more important to develop an appreciation for the complexity of human personality and to learn how to work with others.

Most SEED students believe that the structured traditional school environment does not provide them with opportunities to learn how to work with and relate to others. A quote from one student illustrates these feelings about social development:

> "The regular schools do not permit much in the way of social and emotional development. The lack of formal structure at SEED is a direct contrast because it allows students to freely interact with one another -- both with peers and those of different age and even status levels. By actually experiencing a social relationship, we learn how to develop a rapport with those who are not our peers. At regular school, how often do you see grade twelve or thirteen students speaking to those in grades nine or ten? How you ever seen grade nine or ten students ever approaching, let alone having a discussion with a grade thirteen kid? Age and grade level are a status hang-up in straight school and really prevent people from getting together when they could probably be helping one another. How much of a chance do you get to really open up and get to know a teacher as a person; as a person with whom you could truly call by his first name and really get to know? Here, we often work with others of different ages. Our catalyst classes are not conducted with age or grade level in mind. Some of the younger kids have just as good or better ideas to present as the older ones. We often work together with kids in other grades on projects and assignments."

Despite the fact that there appears to be a lack of structure at SEED, each student imposes his own structure on the programme according to his needs and his goals. Each student must make his own decision concerning his own individual learning programme or course of studies,

his own method of studying and his own decision about his progress or lack of it. Several students have recently dropped out of the school because they were unable to handle the lack of structure. They felt that they could work better back in a regular classroom. Although class attendance is not taken for the SEED courses, students whose attendance is irregular are told by the others to drop out if they really aren't interested enough to come to their meetings. Either that, or they advise them to reorganize their work loads. In the following quotation one student illustrates the kinds of insecurity which this environment can create:

> "It's not really that easy being a student here you know! There's a hell of a lot of insecurity at first and you just have to learn to adapt. If you aren't motivated to do your thing you're dead. In straight school you are told what to read, what to learn and what homework to do. It's pretty secure knowing what is expected of you. At SEED, no one tells you what to do, you have to learn what you want out of the school and how to get it. If you don't get it, it's your own fault. If you fail to meet your own expectations about a course it's your own fault. You see, if the catalyst you get wasn't so good, you have only yourself to blame for sticking around instead of getting a better one. You have got to develop initiative and tact in this case. This is reality, man. In straight school everything is kind of rosy -- but you have no say in what <u>you</u> are interested in learning. Besides, a lot of the stuff they teach you isn't that useful and it isn't taught in a very interesting way."

One catalyst mentioned that attendance in his course is consistently good and also remarked that most of the students are exceedingly willing to learn and take a very mature and serious attitude toward their work in his course. What perturbed him was his observation that most of the students he has seen at SEED are not as carefree and as

happy as those he has seen in regular schools. He attributes this to the seriousness and concern with which these students view the state of their society, coupled with their superior awareness of reality. He believes that SEED students are under no delusions about the real world and this probably has some effect on them. Having to learn how to cope with all of this as well as having realization that each one of them is ultimately responsible to himself for his own education probably produces the seriousness with which the students view their work. This serious and concerned attitude is demonstrated by student participation in issues involving education, civil liberties, and polution. Despite this attitude, the students are by no means lacking in the ability to sense beauty and to experience joy. It appears that much of their happiness is derived from a sense of knowing that they are in a position to fulfill their educational aspirations as they see fit.

THE "FINAL REPORT"

The foregoing has been written in response to many inquiries requesting some information about SEED. The intent was to present a brief description of SEED without examining the complex processes inherent in the programme. After June, when the first year is completed, another report will be prepared. Through quotations, photographs, observations and a few statistics it will attempt to provide some feeling for what happened during the year and to indicate some of the outcomes and consequences of the programme. It is already apparent that the goals of many of the students differ from the goals often associated with secondary schools. The participant observer should not impose his values of "good" and "bad" on these goals. He will try to provide enough facts and data so that parents, teachers, trustees and others will be able to find the answers to many of their questions.

"Do the students really benefit from such a programme?" is one frequent question. Undoubtedly there will be many benefits in some areas and few benefits in others. The answers to the question will depend on which benefits concern the questioner. The report will try to enable the questioners to obtain answers to such difficult questions. Some questions like, "How much do the students actually learn?" can never be fully answered: nonetheless, every attempt will be made to develop a report that responds to the interests which have been expressed.